



News Release

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Changes to Capitol Square Regulation Take Effect for Permitting, Use of Historic Grounds

~ New regulation formalizes many current practices, replaces 1970 rules governing permitted events ~

RICHMOND, Va. _ Following a nearly two-year process to update rules that had been in place since 1970, the Department of General Services (DGS) today announced that an updated regulation governing the use of Capitol Square is in effect. The revised regulation establishes standards for the general use of the historic grounds as well as the processing, review, and disposition of permit applications for events on Capitol Square.

“The revised regulation reflects added security and safety requirements established to ensure the safety of participants and the protection of the historic grounds during events on Capitol Square,” said **Joe Damico, Director of DGS**. “This revised regulation strikes the right balance of protecting people’s rights to gather on Capitol Square and our ability to ensure it is done safely.”

The revised regulation formalizes many longstanding policies, including time limits for events (one hour with 30 minutes before and after for setup and takedown), limiting events to one at a time, all events will be held at the Bell Tower, and permit requests are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. It also officially sets the Capitol Square hours of operation from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m.

Changes in the new regulation include the following:

- A permit is required for any event with 10 or more people (previous regulation requires a permit for an event with one or more individuals)

- Outlines criteria for granting a permit
- Outlines times for permitted events (sunrise to sunset, within the hours of 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. when Capitol Square is open to the public)
- Sets the following timeframes for permit applications:
 - Permit applications must be submitted six days in advance of the planned events that are expected to draw fewer than 1,000 participants
 - Permit applications must be submitted 45 days in advance of events that are anticipated to have 1,000 or more participants
 - An applicant can request an exception to these submission deadlines for a spontaneous event as long as certain criteria are met, including outlining why the event reasonably did not allow an earlier application submission
 - Applications will be accepted up to 180 days before the permitted event (previous regulation did not include a submission deadline)
 - DGS has five days to respond to permit request, except in the case of spontaneous events or those that require additional department or law enforcement review

The process to update the regulation began in August 2020. The regulatory process included multiple opportunities for public comment, including a public hearing that was held on October 12, 2021 to gather input. The changes became effective on May 25, 2022.

More information, including applications for a permitted event, can be found at dgs.virginia.gov.

About DGS: DGS provides laboratory, procurement, real estate, and engineering and architectural services for state agencies, as well as fleet vehicle management, graphic design, surplus property disposal, and mail services at the seat of government. The agency also manages the facilities and grounds at Capitol Square.

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